According to representations received from the family members of the missing defence personnel including representations from Missing Defence Personnel Relatives Association, there are 54 Indian defence personnel in the custody of Pakistani authorities as prisoners of war. Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), which is the nodal Ministry on this issue, has been taking up this matter on several occasions with Pakistan at various levels, including that of the Prime Minister. During his visit to Pakistan from 20-21 February, 1999, Prime Minister raised this issue with the Prime Minister of Pakistan and the two sides appointed a 2-member Committee at Ministerial level to examine humanitarian issues, including that of the missing personnel. The matter was also raised in the official level discussion held with Pakistan on March 5-6, 1999. The Pakistani side stated that there were no Indian POW's in its custody, but agreed to re-examine the matter afresh. The Government would continue to purposefully pursue this matter with Pakistan.

No delegation of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan visited India recently. However, chairperson of Human Rights Commission of Pakistan visited India as leader of a women's delegation.

All the missing defence personnel of 1965 and 1971 wars, after a lapse of 7 years, have been presumed to be killed and their families are given liberalised pensionary awards, which include liberalised family pension, gratuity, children allowance and education allowance for children.

Modernisation of Naval, Air and Armed Forces of the country

331. SHRI ANANTA SETHI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have a proposal to strengthen and modernise Naval, Air and Armed Forces of the country;

(b) whether this is felt necessary after Kargil war;

(c) if so, the funds earmarked therefor; and

(d) the steps taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (d) The strengthening of the country's Defence is a continuous process. The requirements of our Armed Forces are reviewed on a continuing basis for induction of modernized weapons and weapon systems and keeping in view threat perceptions and the prevailing strategic/security environment as also emerging technologies. Most of the weapons purchased post Kargil were based

on a plan evolved much earlier, but the procurement process was given an impetus as a result of "OP VIJAY". India's Defence budget has been increasing year after year in order to strengthen/modernize the country's Defence. The allocation for the Armed Forces for the year 2000-2001 has been considerably increased from Rs. 48,504 crores during the year 1999-2000 to Rs. 58,587 crores resulting an increase of 21% over the last financial year, keeping in view the emerging needs of Defence preparedness. A substantial portion of the Defence budget is earmarked for equipping the Defence Services with modernized weapons and weapon systems. The funds earmarked for capital modernization during the current year is Rs. 15,980.56 crores which is 27% of the total budget as against Rs. 11,009.76 crores (23% of the total budget) during the last Financial Year.

Weapons recovered/seized by the army in North-Eastern Region

332. PROF. M.M. AGARWAL: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state: -

(a) the details of weapons recovered/seized by the Army and other security forces in North-Eastern Region of the country during the last two years, year-wise and the mode adopted for their use/ disposal;

(b) the steps taken to ensure proper control of these weapons and to check their misuse;

(c) whether any investigation has been conducted as to how such weapons are finding their way to these States; and

(d) if so, the outcome thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) The Army/Assam Rifles recovered/seized 955 assorted weapons including 528 country made guns and 597 assorted weapons including 264 country made guns, respectively, during the period July 1998-July 1999 and July 1999- July 2000 (upto July 20) from various terrorist outfits in the North-Eastern Region. All the weapons recovered, except in Nagaland, have been handed over to the Police as per law. In Nagaland, owing to the ongoing Cease-fire and the existence of Ground Rules and Monitoring Mechanism, a total of 104 weapons recovered from NSCN(I/M) have been retained by Army/Assam Rifles in consultation with the Cease-fire Monitoring Group. The details of weapons recovered by CPOs/State Police forces are being ascertained and will be made available.

(b) Detailed instructions have been issued to all concerned to ensure that the